

NURSING IN MISSION STATIONS



NURSING IN A FOREIGN LAND

By E. C. WOODS

THE conditions which will confront a nurse in a hospital in such a country as China are not just those in which she has received her training. Yet from many points of view they are such as to attract rather than to repel. It is the conditions that really make the work the opportunity that it is, especially in such an opening as is now presented in the University Medical School in Canton, the foreign work of the Christian Association of the University of Pennsylvania. The work has just been started. One physician is now on the field, Dr. J. C. McCracken, 1901, University of Pennsylvania. He is purchasing land on which it is expected to erect a permanent dispensary and hospital, for which the money is in hand. At present he is at work learning the language and meeting from twenty-five to fifty patients daily in the small temporary dispensary. The first year's work of the nurse would be that of learning the language and helping in the dispensary a few hours each day. Later on, with the coming of the hospital, her duties would be that of a graduate nurse, and as proper candidates presented themselves, she would train several assistants, acting as head nurse to them. As the hospital grows, she would train as large a staff as would be required and act as superintendent. She would need patience and ability to modify methods so as to suit existing conditions. The set rules of an American Hospital could not be imposed unchanged upon a hospital in China. But principles are the same and will in every case point to the best methods. The work is small in its beginnings, and discouragements must be expected at first, but persistent effort will bring a realization of the greatness of the opportunity. There are still other attractions: chief of which, and inclusive of most, is the community of fifteen to twenty cultivated and enjoyable Americans, situated at the Canton Christian College, whose campus joins that of the Medical School. Canton also is a large city with a foreign settlement. The following quotations from a letter written by Dr. A. H. Woods while in China, and who worked in Canton for about seven years, may be of interest to any prospective candidate:

This is to give our views about a nurse. Just a commonplace nurse would not make a success out here at the present juncture. So far as I know no one has yet undertaken in China just the kind of work that we desire the nurse to do. Conditions make it necessary that we find an unusual combination of characteristics in the man or woman who is to start our training school. The root trouble here is that the spirit that makes men and especially women in America love the work, is entirely lacking. It is looked upon as drudgery, and only the lowest class of men and women will undertake it. Hence we want a nurse who can inculcate the spirit into the pupils and train them.

The conditions the nurse must confront are these:

As things now are native women will have to be trained by a master-hand before we would dare trust them to nurse men patients. It could be brought about by the right woman. Of course with the woman patients the problem is easy.

To start the nurses' department will require some one who will go in and do all the necessary tasks before the eyes of the assistants, but with such a bearing that they will never think of the work being servile; on the contrary they might be led to want to do it simply because they saw their leader doing it.

The people out of whom we must make our nurses are deficient in faithfulness. The trainer of nurses in China will be often discouraged by a degree of carelessness and petty weaknesses that are not often encountered in America. Here again, however, the right nurse could in the end succeed in transforming such material as we have into what we need.

The woman to do this work should be mature, with proper poise, so unquestionably a lady that low men patients would be unable to say vulgar things in her presence. She must be not only a good nurse, but able to train others, to organize the work for us and keep it going.

Concerning the danger of such a woman marrying and so leaving us, I have no suggestions. The proper woman for any difficult place is bound to be just the right woman for some man to fall in love with. But if, to other qualifications, she could add this virtue of widowhood or celibacy, it would leave us with a freer outlook. A clause in the contract could easily cover this point so as to be fair to both parties.

I write thus in detail about the difficulties because you will be asked in detail about the situation. It is important that no one come out to do this work without knowing what it means. If in the face of such knowledge a good nurse determines to come, we would have greater likelihood of seeing the department started and carried to success. We doctors will keep in close relationship with the head of the nursing department. We will all be together and so should be socially congenial. There will be no such thing as friction, if all recognize that as specialists each has his own responsibility. The nurse has the nurse's special work which is as dignified as that of an architect employed to build a building. We would not look for servile obedience, but we must of course have the ordinary coöperation such as would exist in a good hospital. The nurse should have a private suite of rooms, and set of servants, conveniently near the hospital. It is essential that the language be mastered, hence our desire to see the nurse out here and studying, early in the history of our work. We must insist upon all of our workers perfecting themselves in

the peoples' colloquial. Without this we will be working forever with dull tools, and misunderstandings with the people will be inevitable.

The salary for such a position is not meant to cover the worth of the person filling it. That is impossible. It is only meant to enable the worker comfortably to give her time and energy to her work. It would be six hundred dollars a year, with fifty dollars to help towards a summer outing of two to four weeks and a winter holiday of two weeks. The period of service would be six years, one of which would be spent at home on furlough, salary to continue during that time. She would also receive her necessary travelling expenses and rent of house or suite of rooms. Should she voluntarily resign within five years she would refund all travelling expenses and one-half of her salary; or within three years all money received to date. Further particulars of this position can be obtained by writing to Dr. J. C. McCracken, Canton, China, or to Edward C. Woods, Houston Hall, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pa.

ITEMS

FROM *Woman's Work* we quote the following:

DOUW HOSPITAL AND DISPENSARY, PEKING.—Dr. Eliza E. Leonard in charge, Miss Janet McKillican, nurse.—Miss McKillican's return has been an inestimable boon. She had charge of evangelistic work, and gave valuable assistance in the operating and clinic room. We have had two Chinese assistant nurses, but neither belong to our mission and, the coming year, they will be engaged elsewhere. There are now so many avenues open to young women that one must have a real love for it and be animated by the spirit of the Meek and Lowly One, in order to deliberately choose a nurse's calling and make a success of it. Our experience the past year has proved there are such young women in China. Practically none in North China, outside of a mission school, is fitted to attempt the life. Regular lectures have been given in the Training School, five nurses being in attendance.

HODGE MEMORIAL HOSPITAL, PAOTINGFU.—Patients try to give something to the hospital to show their gratitude for help. It is often hard to accept their gifts, because we know that the few copper cents they have hoarded and brought, wrapped in brown paper and tied with a red string, have probably been saved from needed food.

IN Hiogo, Japan, a native gentleman offered to present the portrait of some distinguished man or woman to a primary school, according to the children's own choice. George Washington headed the list, but Miss Nightingale, the only woman whose name appeared, received thirteen votes.

A young Chinese father, a Harvard graduate, whose baby was ill, came to a missionary to ask whether he might borrow her copy of Dr. Holt's *Care and Feeding of Children*, as his wife did not know how to care for her sick child.

A MESSAGE FROM KOREA.—Miss Margaret Edmunds writes from Seoul to the JOURNAL:

Your opinion of the *Manual of Nursing* as published by the Medical Association of China is especially interesting since this very book is now nearly ready for publication in the Korean language.

Korean women have proven their ability to become thoroughly good nurses. School diplomas and gold pins are now being made in America and will be presented next year to Korea's first graduate nurses.



THE PROBLEM OF DISINFECTION.—*The Medical Record* in an editorial says in part: Professor H. Kenwood, a recognized British authority on disinfectants and on disinfection generally, recently read a paper on the subject in London. Among other valuable information he gave was the fact that there is an advantage in the use of disinfectants in a warm condition. The physical conditions under which germicidal tests are made are of greater importance than is usually thought. The atmospheric temperature is of great importance a precise temperature, 20°C., has been fixed by the Lister Institute as of necessity, if strictly comparable results are to be obtained. In regard to disinfecting rooms which have been occupied by persons suffering from infectious disease, Professor Kenwood appeared to be in agreement with the custom followed in some parts of America not to disinfect rooms at all unless the patient had been detained in them for a long period. From the standpoint of efficiency there can be little to choose between different methods of disinfection, provided that it is recognized that they represent but one step of several which are necessary for the complete disinfection of the room and its contents, and that the most important of these steps are the washing down with soap and a disinfecting solution of all those surfaces on which dust, and with it germs, can settle, and the removal, for steam disinfection, of all articles into which germs can penetrate.